



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Amanda M. Dewey

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)
Christopher S. Brittan Powell
Jason W. Papanikolas
Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes February 1, 2021 | 7:00 pm

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency. The meeting was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents were given the opportunity to join the meeting via Zoom and comment by telephone and email.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs), Jason Papanikolas and Ethan Sweep. CM Christopher Brittan-Powell arrived 5 minutes late. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Laura Allen, and Town Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey thanked Public Works and Police employees for working around the clock the last two days to clear the roads of snow and make sure they are safe. Due to the snow, the trash collection schedule for the week was changed.

2. Approval of the Agenda

On a motion by CM Sweep and second by CM Papanikolas, the agenda was approved 4 to 0.

3. Discussion Items

Pepco filing comment letter: Mayor Dewey said the Council had a meeting with Pepco's External Affairs Manager Tony Ruffin in November 2020, and he briefed them on Pepco's planned upgrade of streetlights to LED lights. Mr. Ruffin answered questions about the project from the Council and the Green Team, which had submitted questions in advance.

TM Allen explained that in October 2020 Pepco filed a multi-year plan with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to modernize its electric grid, which includes converting Company-owned streetlights to smart LED technology. As part of the filing, Pepco is requesting a rate increase of 4.4% (\$5.50) in 2023 and 4.2% (\$5.50) in 2024 to recover the cost of the improvements. The Council has an opportunity to submit comments to the PSC regarding Pepco's plan and attendant rate increases by May 5, 2021. In addition to written comments, feedback can be provided at public hearings on March 15 and April 15. TM Allen recommended that a comment letter state whether or not the Council supports the grid modernization and include any concerns with particulars of the plan or its process of implementation.

TM Allen answered Councilmembers questions about the filing. She believes the proposed rate increase of \$11.00 over a 2-year period is permanent and she will confirm that with Pepco. The rate increase would be standard for the entire project area, i.e. Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. Utilities are not permitted to establish a rate stabilization reserve or capital improvement reserve.

Councilmembers proposed to include the following points in a comment letter:

- Express overall support for grid modernization and LED lighting.
- Request PSC to ensure future lighting complies with guidance from the American Medical Association and Dark Skies.
- Ensure that Pepco will work in partnership with municipalities to meet our lighting needs as the streetlight upgrade is implemented
- Ensure that fully shielded lighting options are available where they are needed.
- Ensure that the cost borne by local governments for the project is fair across the project area.
- Express interest in Berwyn Heights being considered for early/ late installation.

TM Allen will draft a comment letter based on the concerns raised tonight which will be reviewed and approved at a future meeting. TM Allen will include a request to have Pepco provide more detail on the process of coordinating with municipalities before and during installation.

Budget process: TM Allen provided an update on the proposed FY 2022 budget process. She said that the coming budget process has been advertised and input solicited via a budget survey in the Bulletin that is also available on the website and social media. In addition, a virtual Town Hall meeting on the budget has been scheduled for February 17. Residents will also be polled on code compliance services via social media. Town organizations will be notified to submit budget requests in the coming week. In March, TM Allen will submit a draft budget, which will be introduced for public comment in April and adopted in May.

Mayor Dewey encouraged residents to give input on the budget process as the best opportunity to influence Council's spending decisions and the future direction of Town affairs.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey reported that she swore in Officer Frayer in an outdoor ceremony last week. Officer Frayer first served as a BHPD Public Safety Aide in the past, knows Berwyn Heights, and looks forward to serving in an official capacity. Mayor Dewey gave an update on the County's vaccination plan, currently in phase 1C. A phone hotline, 311#, has been opened for people to register. While progress is being made on the vaccination front, everyone is asked to continue to comply with COVID safety protocols.

Mayor Dewey further reported that the Council attended a virtual Four Cities meeting hosted by College Park at which University of Maryland President Darryll Pines was present. Discussion revolved around the University's collaboration with the surrounding communities, COVID-19 and transportation issues.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that officials from University Park, Riverdale and Hyattsville attended the Four Cities virtual meeting. They participated in the discussion with President Pines and the UMD campus-community connections (C3) program. It was noted that the University has a business incubator program, which may be of interest to small businesses in Berwyn Heights.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy continued that Councilmembers also attended a PGCMA meeting, at which County Council Chair Calvin Hawkins was present. He expressed his interest in working with municipalities and offered assistance with any County legislative initiatives and small grant needs. PGCMA and MML are working on a state level to have legislation for on-line sports betting send some of these new revenues directly to municipalities. MPT Kulpa-Eddy further announced that an ongoing PGC Cultural

Arts Study was extended to March 19. Residents can give input online and at several upcoming virtual meetings. The County is also requesting citizen input on updates to a 2009 Countywide Transportation Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, which is posted on M-NCPPC's Transportation Planning Division's webpage.

In community news, the Historical Committee next meets on February 24 and is highlighting virtual presentations by the College Park Airport Museum on African-American military aviators on its Facebook page. The Education Advisory Committee meets on January 22 and is working on developing an education grant submission and review process. College Park's Education Advisory Committee will host a virtual Town Hall on February 18 with School Board Representative Joshua Thomas focused on virtual learning. The BHEAC is also sponsoring a Valentines' teacher appreciation event, which can be accessed via the Town website and social media. The Recreation Council will hold a meeting on February 2 to brainstorm ideas for Berwyn Heights Day. NW/EP's meeting will take place on February 3 and will likely focus on the purpose of the new emergency trailer and updates to the emergency operations plan. The Green Team will meet on February 11 at which Pepco's street light upgrades will likely be discussed.

CM Papanikolas thanked Public Works for getting through its first significant snowstorm in 2 years without problems. TM Allen thanked Clerk Harper for coming in on a snow day and staffing the office today.

CM Brittan-Powell reported that Code staff settled a code violation that was issued in error.

CM Sweep reiterated this week's trash schedule, which was altered due to Public Works performing snow plowing duty.

5. Resident and Community Comments

MPT Kulpa-Eddy mentioned she had received an extra copy of the Bulletin in the mail. Clerk Harper reminded residents if they do not receive a copy, extras are available for pick-up outside the Town Office, and a color version is available online on the Town website.

On a motion by CM Sweep and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk